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# CIA Admits Yurchenko Mistakes, Panel Reports

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**WASHINGTON**—CIA officials have acknowledged that the agency made mistakes in its handling of high-level Soviet KGB officer Vitaly Yurchenko and agreed to appoint an independent expert to review its actions, a Senate Intelligence Committee spokesman said Wednesday.

"The committee's conclusion was that security was lax," the spokesman said after "working-level" CIA officials privately briefed the panel Tuesday night. He said the officials promised to

give the committee the results of the review in six weeks.

While CIA officials declined to specify the agency's errors, the committee spokesman said, the CIA briefers "were very straightforward. They said some mistakes were made."

A CIA spokesman declined to comment on the briefing, citing a "very firm" agency policy against talking about any aspect of the Yurchenko matter.

Yurchenko boarded a special Aeroflot jet at Dulles International

Airport on Wednesday afternoon and flew home to Moscow.

Yurchenko, 50, called a press conference Monday at the Soviet Embassy here and accused U.S. intelligence agents of abducting him, drugging him and holding him against his will until he managed to escape Saturday. The United States has branded those allegations as false and said Yurchenko voluntarily defected at the U.S. Embassy in Rome last July.

In any case, some current and former intelligence officials said

Wednesday that the loss of Yurchenko shows the need for the CIA to get "back to the basics" in handling Communist Bloc defectors.

They cited what they regard as shortcomings in security as well as an apparent failure to detect that Yurchenko was having second thoughts about his reported defection.

"There was bad mishandling by the agency," said one source who has knowledge of what took place during the three months that Yurchenko was being debriefed by the CIA and the FBI.

"You should know them (defectors) well enough so that when they are sliding downhill emotionally, you can help them," the

source said. "That doesn't seem to be the case here."

While the CIA since the mid-1970s has been following a policy that defectors have the same constitutional rights as American citizens, "this doesn't mean you take the guy to a Georgetown restaurant within walking distance of the Soviet residence compound," another critical official said.

ABC News reported that, at the restaurant, Au Pied de Cochon, Yurchenko asked his CIA companion: "What would you do if I walked out? Would you shoot me?"

"No, of course not," the CIA escort said. "We don't treat defectors that way." Yurchenko then left the restaurant, reportedly saying: "If I'm not back in 15 minutes,

don't blame yourself."

While the CIA is being criticized for its apparent laxity in handling Yurchenko, the agency came under fire from Congress for its harsh handling of an earlier Soviet defector, Yuri Nosenko, who crossed over to the West in 1964.

Partly because his reliability was questioned by some CIA officials, Nosenko was kept under guard for five years—three of them in solitary confinement, in a specially constructed concrete and steel structure, much like a bank vault.

The CIA's "hostile interrogations" of Nosenko, who was denied reading material and other diversions, proved counterproductive, an agency official later told the House Assassinations Committee.